

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 03765 160744Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 INRE-00
NSAE-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 PM-05 PA-02 ICAE-00
CPR-01 /058 W

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O R 160656Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3280

INFO CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

UNCLAS CANBERRA 3765

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PEPR, PINR, AS

SUBJ: DEATH OF SIR ROBERT GORDON MENZIES

1. ROBERT GORDON MENZIES, AUSTRALIA'S LONGEST-SERVING PRIME MINISTER, WARTIME LEADER, FATHER OF THE AUSTRALIAN-AMERICAN ALLIANCE, AND ARGUABLY THE LAST OF THE GREAT AGE OF WORLD WAR II'S ALLIED LEADERS, DIED PEACEFULLY ON MONDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 15, AT HIS HOME IN MELBOURNE.

2. AUSTRALIA IS IN MOURNING, AND POLITICAL MUDSLINGING, THAT FAVORITE OF ALL AUSTRALIAN PASTTIMES, IS IN ABEYANCE PENDING HIS FUNERAL, SCHEDULED FOR 2:00 P.M. MELBOURNE TIME (MIDNIGHT THURSDAY NIGHT WASHINGTON TIME) ON FRIDAY, MAY 19.

3. IT APPEARS CERTAIN THAT PRINCE CHARLES WILL REPRESENT ELIZABETH II; EITHER FORMER PRIME MINISTER
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PAGE 02 CANBER 03765 160744Z

MACMILLAN OR FORMER PRIME MINISTER DOUGLAS HUME WILL REPRESENT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT; PRIME MINISTER MULDOON WILL REPRESENT NEW ZEALAND; PRIME MINISTER DESAI WILL PROBABLY REPRESENT INDIA; PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU MAY COME ON BEHALF OF CANADA; AND OTHER STATESMEN WILL BE DESCENDING UPON A MELBOURNE WHICH IS GOING INTO THE AUSTRALIAN WINTER.

4. THE CONDOLENCE STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS OFFICE ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT CARTER HAS BEEN WELL RECEIVED AND WIDELY PUBLICIZED IN AUSTRALIA.

5. A FINAL DECISION HAS NOT YET BEEN REACHED ON DRESS FOR THE FUNERAL, BUT IT APPEARS THAT DRESS FOR MEN WILL BE EITHER SHORT BLACK COAT AND STRIPED TROUSERS, OR DARK LOUNGE SUIT. IT WILL NOT RPT NOT INCLUDE SILK HAT NOR MORNING DRESS (I.E., SWALLOW-TAILS). DRESS FOR LADIES WILL BE "DAY DRESSES" (I.E., SHORT DRESS), HAT AND GLOVES AND A WARM COAT. DRESSES SHOULD BE SUBDUED BUT NOT NECESSARILY BLACK. FYI, MELBOURNE IS GOING INTO WHAT WOULD BE EQUIVALENT TO LATE FALL WEATHER IN WASHINGTON, WITH DAYTIME TEMPERATURES IN THE MIDDLE TO UPPER FORTIES, AND THE STRONG POSSIBILITY OF RAIN.

6. EMBASSY WILL KEEP WASHINGTON APPRISED OF DETAILS OF FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS AS THEY DEVELOP.
ALSTON

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